

Chapter 10 Grammar and Usage

1. Sentence patterns

sentence	verb type (transitive, intransitive, linking, to be)	predicate after the verb (direct object, subject complement, etc.)	tense (see question #3)
a. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell by 53 points.			
b. I will lie down.			
c. She laid the newspaper down.			
d. A virus is a pathogen.			
e. The accident occurred yesterday.			
f. The program works well.			
g. The students worked the algebra problems.			
h. The marketing strategy seems successful.			
i. All members are present.			

2. Transitive and intransitive verbs

The sentences in a and b are both common, but which is “correct”?

- a. She graduated from college.
- b. She graduated college.

Is the verb “graduated” transitive or intransitive?
(Check your dictionary.)

How does your answer define what should follow the verb?

How does “from college” function in sentence a?

How does “college” function in sentence b?

How would an editor determine the better choice of sentences?

3. Tense

- a. For the sentences in exercise #1, identify whether the verb tense is present, past, or future.
- b. Edit this paragraph with particular attention to verb tense.

We take great pleasure in welcoming you to our staff. We hope our relationship is one of mutual understanding and support. The owners had many years of experience in the operation of successful and profitable businesses. We were fortunate in the past with our choices for our staff, and we sincerely hope that you will follow in this path.

4. Parts of speech

Identify the parts of speech of all the underlined words in the following sentences. If necessary, consult a dictionary or a handbook of grammar and usage. Note with regard to sentence 3 that a gerund (noun formed from a verb) can take an object just as a verb can.

¹Genomes are complete sets of genetic instructions for assembling and sustaining the life of an organism. ²Not surprisingly, the human genome is overwhelmingly complex. ³Biotechnology will soon be capable of mapping and sequencing the human genome. ⁴A genome map will show scientists precisely where genes are located on a chromosome. ⁵This map will provide a basis for predicting genetic diseases. ⁶This project will be expensive. ⁷It will cost millions of dollars each year.

word	part of speech	word	part of speech
Genomes		human	
are		genome	
complete		A	
sets		genome	
of		map	
genetic		will	
instructions		show	
Not		scientists	
surprisingly		precisely	
the		This	
human		map	
genome		will	
is		provide	
overwhelmingly		This	
complex		project	
Biotechnology		will	
will		be	
soon		expensive	
be		It	
capable		will	
of		cost	
mapping		millions	
and		of	
sequencing		dollars	
the			

5. Sentence parts

For each of the sentences in application #4:

- a. Identify the simple subject, complete subject, complete predicate, and modifiers.
- b. Identify the type of verb (transitive, intransitive, linking, *to be*) and complement, if any.

	simple subject	complete subject	complete predicate	modifiers	type of verb
Genomes are complete sets of genetic instructions for assembling and sustaining the life of an organism.					
Not surprisingly, the human genome is overwhelmingly complex.					
Biotechnology will soon be capable of mapping and sequencing the human genome.					
A genome map will show scientists precisely where genes are located on a chromosome.					
This map will provide a basis for predicting genetic diseases.					
This project will be expensive.					
It will cost millions of dollars each year.					

6. Subject and verb

The following sentences contain errors in the verb or complement.

For each sentence, first **identify** the simple subject and then the simple verb. (Remember that the grammatical subject may differ from the topic of the sentence.)

Mark these words (simple subject, simple verb, and subject complement in sentences with *to be* verbs) by underlining them.

If the verb is a linking or *to be* verb, identify the complement.

Then identify and correct errors in subject-verb agreement or faulty predication. Make editorial changes in the second version of the sentence. (See the example in a.)

- a. The overall **condition** of the facilities **are good to very good**. [marked]
The overall condition of the facilities is good to very good. [corrected]
- b. The resources dedicated to repair is minimal.
- c. The record of all courses attempted and completed appear on the transcript.
- d. A wide range of extracurricular activities are available to students.
- e. Shipment of factory sealed cartons are made from our warehouse via the cheapest and fastest way.
- f. The benefit of the annuity to the investor will be a source of additional retirement income.
- g. The income from the annuity does not indicate that it will offset living expenses.
- h. The agriculture industry is susceptible to pest problems.
- i. Overloading on the library floor has moved approximately 20,000 volumes off campus to avoid structural damage to the building.
- j. The interaction between the chemical mechanism and the dynamic mechanism appears to be the two important factors behind the depletion of the ozone layer.
- k. The purpose of this section of the report is to increase the fatigue strength of an already welded joint.

7. Dangling modifiers

The following sentences contain dangling modifiers.

Identify the dangling modifier by underlining it.

Edit the sentences by inserting missing subjects into sentences or by converting modifiers to clauses. You may create two sentences from one if necessary for clarity. Which of the original sentences are written with passive voice verbs?

- a. When preparing copy for the typesetter or when correcting errors on the screen, the cursor can be easily moved with the mouse.

- b. Rather than make marks on the copy, the change can be placed in the computer for a faster and neater job.

- c. The cost of production can be reduced by purchasing software and hardware for desktop publishing.

- d. A mosquito bit Lord Carnarvon on his left cheek five months after entering King Tut's tomb.

- e. Growing up to five feet long and weighing over 600 pounds, natives on the Moluceas Archipelago use the shells of the giant man-eating clam as children's bathtubs.

- f. By using lead-free gasoline, harmful lead oxides and lead chlorides and bromides are not released into the atmosphere as is the case with leaded (regular) gasoline.

Which of the original sentences are written with passive voice verbs? Identify the sentences by their letters.

8. Misplaced modifiers

The following sentences contain misplaced modifiers. Edit to show where the modifier should go.

- a. Only smoke in the break room.
- b. Racquets with safety thongs and bumpers are only allowed.
- c. Journalists must be able to operate equipment used to produce the stories such as computers.

In your own words, explain the difference between a misplaced modifier and a dangling modifier.

9. Pronouns: case, number, antecedent

The following sentences include pronoun errors of various types. **Identify** the error by underlining. **Edit** to correct the sentence.

- a. A positive attitude allows the waitperson to laugh at oneself and learn from their mistakes.
- b. If an investor wants to sell their shares of stock, they are sold at the market price at the time of sale.
- c. He and myself will conduct a workshop on investments.

10. Usage

- a. What questions of usage do sentences *a* and *b* raise? How should the sentences be edited for formal uses?

(1) Use the express lane if you have **less than** ten items.

Question:

- (2) The project to edit the employee handbook could be divided between several students.

Question:

- b. Consult your dictionary and handbook to determine what advice they may offer about usage on the following two issues:

- (1) **Hopefully:** Is the adverb *hopefully* misused as a substitute for “it is hoped” as in the sentence “Hopefully, we will finish before Friday”? Define the grounds on which the use of *hopefully* could be considered a matter of usage rather than of grammar.
- (2) **“The reason is because...”:** Check *The American Heritage Dictionary* under “because” for a usage note. Remembering sentence patterns with linking verbs and guidelines for subject complements, explain why the structure might be considered grammatically incorrect.

Discuss how usage rather than grammar may determine whether a structure is acceptable.